

# **Extracts of current events**

**Ms. Coll. 1128**

**Finding aid prepared by Rive Cadwallader.**

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Last updated on November 03, 2015.

University of Pennsylvania, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts

2015 October 7

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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository</b>	University of Pennsylvania: Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts
<b>Title</b>	Extracts of current events
<b>Call number</b>	Ms. Coll. 1128
<b>Date</b>	1789-1810, 1829-1831
<b>Extent</b>	0.4 linear feet (1 box)
<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Abstract</b>	<p>This collection contains four journals of an unknown Londoner cataloguing current events from 1789 to 1810 and from 1829 to 1831. The books present short news extracts in chronological order with a date assigned to each entry. Some of the most recurrent themes are aspects of everyday life but the diaries also include political and military news, court verdicts, and information about theaters in London among many other things. This collection is characteristic of a trend towards journal-keeping that grew in England throughout the 18th century. However, these diaries are entirely impersonal and include no information about the author's own life or opinions.</p>

**Cite as:**

Extracts of current events, 1789-1831, Ms. Coll. 1128, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts, University of Pennsylvania

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## Biography/History

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The identity of the creator of this collection is entirely unknown, beyond that he or she lived and wrote during the late Georgian era and probably in London. Though anonymous, these diaries present an accurate picture of England around the turn of the 19th century and are characteristic of personal journals at the time. Diary-keeping was popular in England during the 17th century and became even more widespread by the end of the 18th. Notable examples of this trend include the diaries of Samuel Pepys (1660-1669) and Joseph Farington (1793-1821) and the *Memoirs* of Charles Greville (1821-1860). Source: Birch, Dinah. *The Oxford Companion to English Literature*. (Oxford: OUP, 2009), 291-292

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## Scope and Contents

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This collection contains four journals of an unknown Londoner cataloguing current events from 1789 to 1810 and from 1829 to 1831. The books meticulously present short news extracts in chronological order, with a date assigned to each entry. Occasionally the list of events is broken up by a table or chart providing information such as the amount of beer brewed in London over the course of a year, the rise and fall of bread prices across a set time, or the results of an election. Each volume is paginated and includes a comprehensive, alphabetized index of topics at its end.

A combination of notes by the author, some labeling, and a chronological gap indicate that these books were part of a larger set; the other volumes of which have been separated or lost. The first volume in this collection is the second in the original set and contains entries from April 23, 1789 to May 27, 1798. The following two books date from May 27, 1798 to July 11, 1805 and July 11, 1805 to May 24, 1810, respectively. Then follows a significant gap in the records; the final volume (number eight in the original set) contains entries from April 8, 1829 to May 1831.

All four journals are very consistent in their presentation, style and content. Some of the most recurrent entries describe aspects of everyday life in London including bread prices, unusual weather and the location and extent of fires in the city. Certain news items that are recorded are rather sensationalistic, such as accounts of shipwrecks, duels, the court verdicts of gruesome murder cases and their ensuing executions. Nevertheless, the diaries also deal, to a large extent, with political and military news. The results of city, county and national elections as well as significant parliamentary motions are diligently set down. The outcomes of battles from the Napoleonic Wars are also noted, along with news of the development and repression of the Irish Rebellion of 1798. Other themes in the journals include the deaths of important figures (with a particularly detailed account of the illness and death of King George IV), information about the London theaters and news of the royal family, such as their whereabouts and birthday celebrations.

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## Administrative Information

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### Access Restrictions

This collection is open for research use.

### Use Restrictions

Copyright restrictions may exist. For most library holdings, the Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania do not hold copyright. It is the responsibility of the requester to seek permission from the holder of the copyright to reproduce material from the Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts.

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## Controlled Access Headings

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### FORM/GENRE(S)

- Diaries
- English diaries
- Journals (accounts)

### GEOGRAPHIC NAME(S)

- London (England)--Politics and government
- London (England)--Social life and customs--19th century

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## **Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements note**

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The material volumes themselves are all bound in calfskin but vary slightly in their dimensions. The paper used in all four volumes shows the same watermark, and alternates with sheets of blotting paper (some of which have been torn out, or have had paper with writing pasted on).

## Collection Inventory

	Box	Folder
Book II, 1789 April 23-1798 May 27.	1	1
Book III, 1798 May 27-1805 July 11.	1	2
Book IV, 1805 July 11-1810 May 24.	1	3
Book VIII, 1829 April 8-1831 May.	1	4